Amendments to the Claims

Amendments to the claims are reflected in the following listing of claims, which replaces all prior versions of the claims.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An object distribution system for distributing access to objects, wherein the objects reside on one or more computers attached to a network, the system comprising:

a first computer in communication with the network; wherein the first computer comprises:

a client program;

a distributor program;

a first object proxy, wherein the first object proxy is associated with a first object resident on a second computer in communication with the network; and

a second object proxy, wherein the second object proxy is associated with a second object resident on the second computer;

wherein the first object and the second object are part of an object group comprising a plurality of objects, each of the plurality of objects being configured to perform a particular function, such that the first object, which is associated with the first object proxy, and the second object, which is associated with the second object proxy, perform the same function; and

wherein the distributor program selects between the first and the second ~~object~~ objects, based on a round robin algorithm, to perform the function for the client program; ~~and~~

wherein the distributor program selects the first object to perform the function for the client program only when the first object is available; and

an object request broker in communication with the first computer and configured to send a message to the second computer, the message being related to the function.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the first and the second object proxies are maintained in a cache associated with the distributor program.

4. (Original) The system of claim 3, wherein the distributor program checks to determine if the first object is available.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the distributor program identifies the first and the second objects as providing the function and associates the first and the second objects in an object group.

7. (Original) The system of claim 6, wherein the distributor program identifies the first and the second objects using a naming service.

8. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the first and the second objects are CORBA compliant.

9. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the distributor program provides for both fine and coarse balancing of object distribution.

10. (Currently Amended) An object distribution system for controlling load distribution during access to objects resident on one or a plurality of computers attached to a communication network, the system comprising:

a client computer attached to the network, wherein a client program is resident on the client computer;

a first server attached to the network, wherein a first object is resident on the first server;

a second server attached to the network, wherein a second object is resident on the second server, and wherein the first and the second objects are part of an object group

comprising a plurality of objects, each of the plurality of objects being configured to perform a particular function, such that the first object, which is associated with a first object proxy on the client computer, and the second object, which is associated with a second object proxy on the client computer, perform the same function; and

an object request broker configured to pass requests to the selected object from the client program;

wherein the client computer comprises:

a first object proxy associated with the first object;

a second object proxy associated with the second object; and

a distributor program for receiving requests ~~for the function~~ and for selecting between the first and the second ~~object~~ objects, based on a round robin algorithm, to perform the function for the client program, wherein the requests are passed from the client ~~program.~~ program; and

wherein the distributor program selects the first object to perform the function for the client program only when the first object is available.

11. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 10, wherein the distributor program ~~function~~ balances access between the first and the second objects.

12. (Original) The system of claim 10, wherein the distributor function balances loading across the first and the second servers.

13. (Original) The system of claim 10, wherein the distributor program identifies the first and the second objects as providing the function and associates the first and the second objects in an object group.

14. (Original) The system of claim 13, wherein the distributor program identifies the first and the second objects using a naming service.

15. (Original) The system of claim 10, wherein the first and the second objects are CORBA compliant.

16. (Original) The system of claim 10, wherein the distributor program provides for both fine and coarse balancing of object distribution.

17. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method for balancing object and/or server loads across a communication network, wherein the method comprises:

receiving at a client computer a request for a function from a requesting program resident on the client computer;

~~selecting~~ selecting, with a distributor program resident on the client computer and based on a selection algorithm, an object to provide the function, wherein the selection involves distributing requests for the function across a plurality of objects that are part of an object group, each of the plurality of objects in the object group being configured to perform a particular function, such that each of the plurality of objects performs the same ~~providing the~~ function; and

providing with an object request broker a reference to the selected object to the requesting program, wherein the requesting program can access the selected object to perform the function using the reference;

wherein the plurality of objects comprises a first object and a second object, and the client computer comprises a first proxy object associated with the first object and a second proxy object associated with the second ~~object.~~ object;

wherein the client computer is a first computer and the selected object is resident on a second computer;

wherein the function is performed on the second computer and the results of the function are communicated to the requesting program; and

wherein the distributor checks each of the objects in the group of objects to determine if the objects are available

18.—20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~19,~~ 17, wherein the distributor program selects an object to perform the function from a group of objects which perform the function.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the distributor identifies objects which perform the function and associates the objects in the group of objects.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the distributor queries a CORBA compliant naming service to identify the objects that perform the function.

24. (Canceled)

25. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1 wherein the object request broker resides on the first computer.